

CLINTON HILL NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
26 Shanley Avenue, Newark, 8, New Jersey

FACT SHEET ON THE CLINTON HILL SCHOOL SITUATION

1. In February of 1966, in recognition of the severe overcrowding that had previously been in existence at Bergen and Avon Schools, the Board instituted 14 part-time classes at Bergen and 16 part-time classes at Avon. At present these classes are still in existence. The Council rejected this plan. Proposed possible use of Temple B'nai Abraham on temporary basis, redistricting to relieve overcrowding. These proposals were not acceptable to Department of Education at that time.
2. In order to accomplish this purpose at Avon Avenue School, the auditorium was converted into a series of classrooms, thereby leaving the school without an auditorium.
3. There is no lunchroom at Avon Avenue School. Children are forced to eat their lunches either on the street, at nearby luncheonettes when they are unable to go home to eat.
4. Although the class size was measurably reduced at the outset of the introduction of the split session program, average class size has begun to creep up again, so that the original plan for 30 pupils per class has not, in many cases, been realized.

Background on Overcrowding

1. While it is generally known that the Central Newark Redevelopment program has had a great effect upon the increase in the school population in Clinton Hill schools, according to the Market Research survey, only 28% of new Clinton Hill residents have come from the Central Newark area.
2. Clinton Hill's population, according to the same survey, has increased from 31 to 41 thousand since the 1950 census.
3. This increase has been accommodated by changing uses of existing dwellings. More families are living in units formerly occupied by fewer people. These families are larger than the previous occupants. There is evidence that they are younger as well, thereby increasing the number of children of elementary school age.
4. At a meeting in January, 1959, at which Dr. Kennelly, Mr. Titus, Mrs. Cooper, and representatives of the Council were present, it was stated by Mr. Titus that the population of Clinton Hill was transient. While there is no doubt that transiency has been high, stabilization has begun to take place as the number of house sales in the lower Clinton Hill section has declined. Moreover, the great number of owner occupied houses recently purchased has tended to further reduce transiency.
5. While the contention of some that the population of Clinton Hill is bound to decrease when the Central Newark Redevelopment project is completed has some validity, it is important to note that this project will have only 1500 units and the waiting list is reported to be already 6,000. Furthermore, many have moved out of the redevelopment area permanently, some purchasing homes in Clinton Hill and other communities.

6. The two schools in question were constructed long before 1950 when the population began its steep upward movement.
7. Educators are generally agreed that part-time classes are detrimental to the educational process. Continuance of these classes for an indefinite period cannot but work to the detriment of the students of these schools. To paraphrase a statement made by Dr. Gross, President of Rutgers, "children in split session classes do not have a chance in gaining college admission."
8. We of the Council have appeared before the Board of School Estimate in February, 1959, and subsequently before the Board of Education nine times. In addition, we have had meetings with the President of the Board, various Board members, and the administrative officials dating from July 1958.
9. The 1947 Master Plan provided for the construction of a new school in the Clinton Hill area.
10. According to the City Planning Officer, Mr. Oberlander, greater attention should be given these "fringe areas" in the city which show evidence of declining, rather than those areas already of a slum character. We are convinced that a contributing factor to the out-migration of many residents has been the sub-standard schools in our area.